

The Office of Victims' Services Foundational Academy

In addition to the onboarding and training you will receive by your agency as a new staff member, you may be required to participate in and complete the Office of Victims' Services (OVS) Foundational Academy. The Foundational Academy is reserved for direct service staff and immediate supervisors of direct service staff funded through the:

- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- Rights and Services Act (RASA) and/or
- Victims of Juvenile Offenders (VOJO) Funding Streams.

Note: There is no correlation between percentage of funding to the project and required attendance.

Agencies whose oversight organization is the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR), Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV), and/or the National Children's Alliance (NCA) will abide by the relevant oversight organization's training standard. These agencies will not be required to attend Foundational Academy. **Please note: If a PCAR and/or PCADV funded agency provides services to all crime victims, they must provide documentation to PCCD that staff received additional training to build their skills in service provision to all crime victims.**

New staff of Victim Services Programs providing VOCA, RASA, and or VOJO shall provide documentation of completion of PCCD's Foundational Academy or attend PCCD's Foundational Academy within six months of hire if providing direct services. The 40-hour+ Foundational Academy is held at multiple times throughout the year typically in the State College area and is managed by a consultant through the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Institute (PDAI).

- Registration for the Foundational Academy opens approximately six (6) weeks in advance of each academy. Please note that due to high demand and limited spaces, you are encouraged to register for the academy immediately. Go to the PDAI Training Calendar at www.pdaa.org to check for registration details.
- Information on each Foundational Academy along with registration details is posted in the bi-weekly OVS Newsletter. You may sign up for the OVS Newsletter by emailing Lea Dorsey at: ledorsey@pa.gov.
- The Foundational Academy consists of a three (3) day classroom portion with a variety of speakers, training platforms as well as small group discussions and individual exercises in addition to an independent, on-line study that must be completed within 60- days of the classroom segment. A Supplemental Online Training worksheet tracks on-line participation/independent study and must be turned in to the consultant upon completion.
- A certificate recognizing completion of the Foundational Academy is then presented to the participant. A copy should be retained in your personnel folder.

The following is additional information in further determining whether your position will require completion of the Foundational Academy along with other helpful information. Please note that the following is offered as guidance and is not reflective of all projects and staff working under the VOCA, RASA, and VOJO funding streams. Please consult with your supervisor and/or the OVS Program staff contact as needed.

More info on the Foundational Academy....

The following roles or circumstances will exclude participation in the Foundational Academy:

- Funded positions who have primary roles involving: administrative oversight, accounting and bookkeeping, data entry (outside of funded client related data) grant writing, reception and clerical, information technology and support, maintenance, and other ancillary service roles (i.e. shelter cook, transportation/driver, etc.) are exempt from the PCCD Foundational Academy, however, they must still attend the agency orientation and training.
- Attorneys and therapists are not required to attend the Foundational Academy but are still subject to agency orientation and training. It is understood that these positions are subject to separate licensing and credentialing as well continuing education obligations.
- Consultants and contractors are additionally exempt from the PCCD Foundational Academy. It is understood that Victims Services Programs select consultants and contractors who bring an expertise to the project/program.
 - Please note those contracted by County Commissioners to provide RASA and/or VOJO mandated services must attend.
- Foundational Academy was completed in prior employment with another Pennsylvania victims' services program.
 - Please share a copy of your certificate of completion with your current employer.

For staff hired before the existence of the Foundational Academy, documentation of attendance at PCCD's "Orientation for New Victim Service Providers" or 32 hours of training covering the following topics must be provided:

- Advocacy skills
- Communication
- Counseling skills/Trauma Informed Service Delivery
- Crisis Intervention
- Mandated Reporting
- Disabilities
- Diversity and Cultural Competence
- Ethics in Victim Services
- Overview of the Criminal, Juvenile and Civil Justice system including the appeal process
- Select trainings of types of victims served through the Victims' Services Program
- Self-Care
- Values clarification

What topical areas are covered in the Foundational Academy?

- As noted above, participants can expect to receive training in various formats to include classroom and independent study through multiple learning styles.
- Training is offered in the following areas: advocacy skills, counseling skills through a trauma informed lens, crisis intervention/safety planning, mandated reporter, working with persons with disabilities, diversity and cultural competency, ethics, values, overview

of the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems, communication skills, victims' compensation, victims' rights, and the importance of self-care.

What timelines does OVS establish for completion of the Foundational Academy?

- New staff of Victims' Services Programs providing VOCA funded services at Victim Service programs shall provide documentation of completion of PCCD's Foundational Academy or attend PCCD's Foundational Academy within six months of hire if providing direct services to victims.

Can my agency's VOCA and/or RASA/VOJO grant support expenditures related to the Foundational Academy?

- Expenditures such as travel, meals, and lodging for the classroom portion can be supported.
- The PDAI Consultant will provide guidance on what meals and lodging expenses *may be* covered as a part of your registration.
- Handouts, other printed materials, and thumb drives (in-person Academy) or E-Manual (virtual Academy) are provided with registration.
- Please keep in mind that a Project Modification Request may need to be filed if the budget does not currently support expenses related to the Foundational Academy.

If you have any questions, please contact your PCCD grant contact or Amy Smulkis, Restitution & Victim/Witness Training Consultant at AJS@RestitutionConsulting.com or 717.333.2319.